

# News Release



***Controller of the State of California - Kathleen Connell***

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***FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE***

## ***CONTROLLER KATHLEEN CONNELL CHAIRS SPECIAL FTB HEARING TO STUDY CHILD SUPPORT LEGISLATION***

***Connell Invites Officials and Public to Air Concerns About Legislation  
Which Would Expand FTB'S Responsibilities Towards Child Support Collections***

SACRAMENTO, August 12, 1999 -- State Controller Kathleen Connell, Chair of the Franchise Tax Board called a special meeting to solicit input regarding SB 542 (Burton) and AB 196 (Kuehl), proposed legislation which would considerably expand the duties of FTB in regards to the collection of delinquent child support payments.

“California’s failure to improve the child support system is directly affecting the lives of tens of thousands of children,” said Connell. “We have to ask ourselves the question, ‘Will adding these new responsibilities to FTB improve the bottom line in regards to the amount of delinquent support collected?’”

A study issued in June by FTB, revealed that several major factors challenge the state’s ability to collect past-due child support accounts. According to Connell, prospects for collecting about 75% of the outstanding balance are dim.

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“Court-ordered payments are often issued in default. The non-custodial parent does not appear,” said Connell. “Many parents aren’t willfully neglecting their responsibilities. They simply don’t have the financial means to meet their payment obligations. Others are incarcerated. All these factors must be taken into consideration as we decide the best way to administer the program.”

The FTB hearing will allow those directly affected by the legislation to voice their concerns. Connell is hoping input from both the public and child support officials will assist the FTB Board in fully evaluating the impact of the added responsibilities recommended by SB 542 and AB 196. The results of this hearing will be provided to the Legislature.

Expanding FTB’s role in collecting delinquent child support would require additional funding in the amount of \$12.3 million during the first year and \$5.5 million annually thereafter. It’s anticipated that a transfer of activities currently performed by the counties will eventually increase costs to these counties, as they will be forced to upgrade their record keeping.

“California must make pain-staking efforts to insure that failures committed in the past are not replicated in a new era of child support collection,” said Connell. “The welfare of California’s children is at stake.”

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